Public Safety and Radio Spectrum Guide

When a small child dials 911, the seconds it can take to respond are measured in lives. When a firefighter is trapped in a burning building, a volunteer in a forest fire, or a family in raging flood waters, the ability to receive the right kind of help immediately makes the difference between life and death.

The Nation's public safety workers must be able to communicate with each other effectively, swiftly, and securely, whether in a crisis or performing day-to-day operations. Access to public airwaves, or what is called "spectrum," is vital for communications for every public safety responder in the Nation.

Police officers must be able to respond to criminal activity. Fire and rescue personnel must be able to respond to fire and medical emergencies. And other public safety agencies must be able to contend with missing persons, escaped felons, disasters, and catastrophic accidents. These examples demonstrate the critical need for public safety agencies to communicate over the airwaves.

What Is Radio Spectrum?

"Radio spectrum" refers to the array of channels, like the channels on a television, available for communications transmissions. Commonly referred to as spectrum, these channels are a finite natural resource—they cannot be created, purchased, or discovered.

Most local, state, and federal public safety communications occur by radio
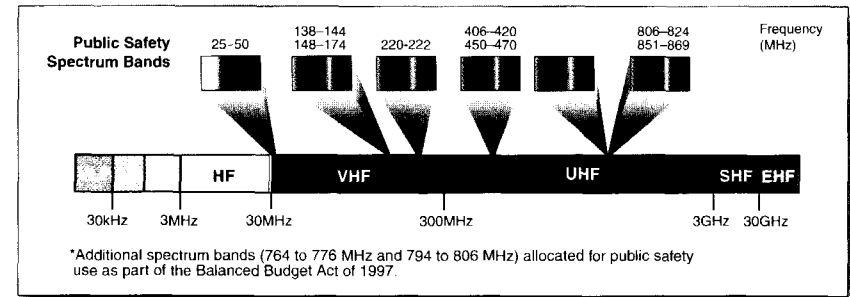
The bands assigned to public safety are spread across the spectrum, creating difficulties for interagency communications.

Almost all local, state, and federal public safety communications occur by radio and use spectrum. Public safety personnel depend heavily on these radio communications to perform their duties and for their own personal safety.

What Is the Problem?

Unfortunately, the scarcity of spectrum for public safety use threatens the ability of the Nation's law enforcement and other public safety personnel to effectively carry out their critical missions. The newspaper accounts presented throughout this guide clearly show what happens when the critical communications link that allows public safety personnel to interact and exchange information is not readily available.

Scarce spectrum results in congestion and interference, limiting the ability of public safety personnel to communicate. Put simply, in many communities not enough spectrum is available for police, fire, emergency medical services, and other public safety personnel to use their radios and communicate among themselves, much less with other public safety agencies.

The scarcity of radio spectrum results in congestion and interference, limiting the ability of public safety personnel to communicate

Communicating across agencies is difficult because bands currently assigned to public safety are spread out across the radio spectrum. Public safety agencies need additional spectrum dedicated solely for interoperable communications (i.e., communications across agencies) that is adjacent to bands they currently use. Without this additional spectrum for interoperable communications, coordinated efforts between public safety agencies are often impossible.

Limited spectrum availability also makes it difficult to take advantage of new technologies. In addition to voice communications, public safety agencies have increasingly significant data transmission requirements, such as mug shots and fingerprints for police, maps and building blueprints for firefighters, and biomedical information for emergency medical services.

Sufficient spectrum is necessary to make new technologies available and ease the implementation of data communications. These new technologies will eventually make routine the receipt of offender or missing persons photographs in a police officer's patrol car or the transmission of critical patient information from an ambulance.

Today, there is not enough spectrum to handle emergencies. But failure to have enough spectrum could leave public safety agencies much further behind tomorrow.

What Has Congress Done?

The problems of the public safety community have not gone unaddressed by our nation's legislators. A growing realization of the communications needs of public safety agencies led Congress to encourage the creation of the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee (PSWAC) in June 1995.
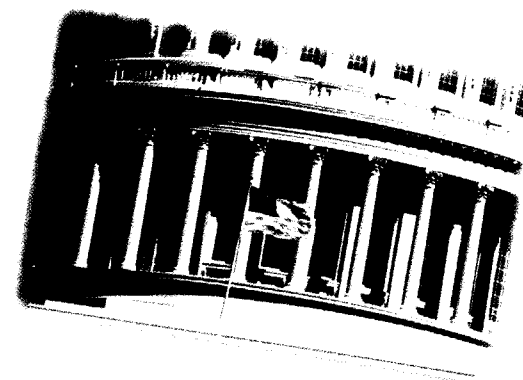
The PSWAC recognized the immediate need for 2.5 Megahertz (MHz) of spectrum proximate to the majority of current public safety spectrum users and demonstrated the near-term need for an additional 25 MHz of spectrum for public safety allocations. The Committee also noted that an additional 70 MHz of spectrum would have to be allocated to ensure that public safety agencies and emergency responders could take full advantage of modern technology that simply will not work without additional spectrum capacity.

Congress has begun to respond. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 requires the reallocation of 24 MHz of spectrum, currently occupied by television broadcasters, for public safety uses. An additional 73.5 MHz of spectrum is still needed to meet the PSWAC's recommendations.

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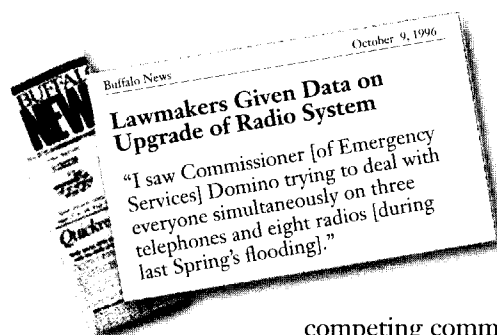
What Remains To Be Done?

Even the reallocation of the 24 MHz triggered by the spectrum provisions in the Balanced Budget Act does not solve the problems currently faced by the public safety community. In many regions of the country, most if not all of the reallocated 24 MHz of spectrum for public safety will not actually be made available until television broadcasters complete their transition to digital broadcasting. Although the Balanced Budget Act mandates that this transition is to be complete by December 31, 2006, it also allows for extensions beyond 2006 if the penetration of digital television service in a given market is not at least 85 percent.

No one can definitively state how long it will take digital television to achieve 85 percent market penetration. The lack of a date certain for transition of this spectrum to public safety makes it difficult, if not impossible, for public safety agencies to plan and design for use of this spectrum.

It is critical that local, state, and federal public safety agencies and personnel speak with one voice to address the community's spectrum needs. Those regulating the issuance of spectrum to public safety users must be reminded of the immediacy of the problem. And those governing the division of this finite natural resource among several competing communications concerns must be asked to recognize the needs of the public safety community.

The lack of a date certain for transition of this spectrum to public safety makes it difficult, if not impossible, for public safety agencies to plan and design for use of this spectrum

Buffalo News

October 9, 1996

Lawmakers Given Data on Upgrade of Radio System

"I saw Commissioner [of Emergency Services] Domino trying to deal with everyone simultaneously on three telephones and eight radios [during last Spring's flooding]."

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is drafting service rules that will govern the issuance of the new 24 MHz of spectrum to the public safety community. Local governments, city officials, and concerned citizens can monitor the FCC's progress by accessing its web page at www.fcc.gov/wtb/publicsafety/. Local officials need to address certain planning issues before an application can be submitted to the FCC. Given the magnitude of the communications problems in some areas of the country, affected parties ought to be mindful of the Commission's regulatory work and the needs of their own communities.

Why Does It Matter?

Public safety's limited spectrum is an issue that affects us all. Whether we are calling for an ambulance, for the fire department, or for the police, the concern is the same: public safety personnel must be able to communicate with each other to protect themselves and to serve this country's citizens. As a nation, we must find a way to provide public safety agencies with enough radio spectrum so that they can carry out their critical functions.

We must find a way to provide public safety agencies with enough radio spectrum so that they can carry out their critical functions

The Salt Lake Tribune

July 10, 1994

Flooding Still Wreaks Havoc in Georgia

The muddy Flint River overran levees and smothered dams as it burst into this southwest Georgia town...the east and west sections of town resembled battlefields where convoys of Marines and national guards rushed over

streets in Humvees and tarp-covered trucks. Emergency crews had problems communicating across the river because of static caused by the heavy cellular phone traffic of residents trying to track down relatives and friends.

Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D.C. 20530

"The safety of all Americans depends on the ability of law enforcement officials to communicate quickly and effectively with each other. We all know that in an emergency, minutes can save lives. But in many urban areas, public safety frequencies are becoming congested. New technologies can transmit mug shots and fingerprints instantly—but only if more frequency space is available for state and local law enforcement. We have assembled this booklet to help explain some of the issues at stake, and to eventually help put new technologies to work saving lives."

Janet Reno
Attorney General of the United States
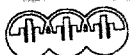
National
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of
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"From careening mud slides imperiling homes and families along our western coasts to terrorist incidents in the east, as public officials we ache to respond in an instant when we know each second counts. New technology can help us respond more rapidly and effectively—but only if we have access to public safety spectrum. This booklet is an important step along the way towards educating policymakers about this critical issue. I hope every leader who truly cares about public safety will read it and join in our effort to make a better tomorrow."

Brian O'Neill
President, National League of Cities

Public
Safety
Wireless
Network

Achieving Interoperability through
Cooperation and Coordination

NATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP
FOR
REINVENTING
GOVERNMENT
Vice President Al Gore

INTRODUCTION BY VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE

NATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP
FOR
REINVENTING
GOVERNMENT
Vice President Al Gore

When the President asked me in 1993 to lead the reinvention of government, the first thing I did was start talking with front-line federal employees about what was broken and how to fix it. In agency offices and at the National Performance Review (NPR), inspired teams worked day and night through the summer of 1993 generating ideas. They got a lot of help from the best in business, as well as state and local reinventors.

When the work was finished, we had 1,200 actions that I recommended to the President. He reviewed them, gave them his endorsement, and made a personal commitment. He said, "Wherever this report says, 'the President should,' this President will."

Among the 1,200 recommended actions was a set of imaginative proposals to make government work better and cost less by reengineering through information technology.

The idea of reengineering through technology is critical. We didn't want to automate the old, worn processes of government. Information technology (IT) was and is the great enabler for reinvention. It allows us to rethink, in fundamental ways, how people work and how we serve customers.

The old way of organizing work is patterned on a factory, a hierarchical system. The system has top management, middle management, and workers, who are seen as cogs in a machine, programmed by those at the top of the pyramid to do simple tasks over and over. This approach forfeits the greatest asset of the organization—the unused brain power, energy, and creativity of the men and women in the organization.

The factory model has outlived its usefulness. Today's computers and communications let us organize to work in a new way. Based on the "distributed intelligence" concept in computing, this new model distributes information and the tools to use that information throughout an organization. Decision-making authority can be placed with employees on the front lines, where change is encountered first.

The 1993 NPR report applied the distributed intelligence model. The recommendations ranged from electronic services for customers to better communications links for employees trying to collect information and work together.

A little over three years later, it is clear that these ideas are living up to their promise. Processes are being reengineered, and they do work better and cost less. But three years

later it is just as clear that we can now make even bolder plans.

There are two reasons. First, programs spawned by the original report have been tremendously successful. They warrant an added push to put them over the top. Even the boldest ideas, like a national Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system, dramatically simplified tax reporting for business, and one trade data system rather than 40, are within reach.

Second, technology continues to change dramatically. Computing power in a standard PC is 50 times what it was then, and storage capacity is 10 times greater—both occurred without an increase in cost. Telecommunications costs are down, and the biggest change of all is the explosive use and capacity of the Internet. The federal government is now delivering millions of tax forms on-line, taking requests for retirement estimates, and providing advice to business. But we have just begun to exploit this new tool.

For these two reasons and more, and in a striking demonstration of the new way to work, teams all over government joined to create the recommendations in this report. Taken together, the recommendations here paint a picture of the kind of government we should have as we begin the next century. It will be a government where all Americans have the opportunity to get services electronically and where, aided by technology, the productivity of government operations will be soaring.

In this new government—

- Seniors will provide facts just once to cover Medicare and all pension programs; payment will, of course, be direct to their account, accessed by a

single card that they carry in their wallet or purse.

- Police on the street will get electronic fingerprint checks and criminal records while suspects are in their grasp, not weeks later.

- Parents will check environmental conditions around town before picking out a new house.

- Students will make their application for loans, get their answers, and if approved, receive their funds, on-line.

- Communities will seek grants, apply for permits, and file reports electronically.

- Companies seeking export markets for their products will go on-line to a one-stop government shop for export assistance.

And behind the scenes for all these transactions, the government will be operating an electronic system that, compared to today's paper-based services, improves privacy and security for individuals.

These images are not the half of it. This report is named "Access America" because it calls for service improvements that will affect all Americans. It doesn't just propose electronic services, it calls for new ways to bring electronic options to all who want them, including those in underserved and rural areas. For each of the actions proposed, we are also mindful of the work that must be done to ensure that technology solutions are truly accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The President and I are just as committed to carrying out the recommendations in this report as we were to the original set. Our

commitment is supported not just by better technology, but also by better management.

The Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996, signed by the President, plus the President's order on Federal Information Technology, and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget have everyone in government thinking in new ways about how to manage IT. The Government Information Technology Services (GITS) Board and its system of champions will promote every idea. The Chief Information Officers (CIOs) at each agency and their new council, established to improve delivery of IT, will provide the leadership for the hard work of carrying out these recommendations agency by agency. As a council, they will take the lead on several governmentwide initiatives.

We are now working with a better procurement system as well. Many of the new hardware and software components we want to use can be purchased off the shelf, and we are using the past performance of vendors to make smarter choices.

This report does not contemplate increases to the President's budget. Indeed, done well, these projects will be a source of savings. The taxpayer error rates for TeleFile tax returns by

phone are a fraction of those for paper returns—less follow-up, less cost. Dozens of law enforcement and public safety communications antennas now in rented space atop the World Trade Center in New York could be replaced with two, and one will be back-up. Reengineering means not just new technology and streamlined processes, it means shifting existing money from old to new ways. The job is to manage those resources and make investments so that these projects can begin to pay off.

The underlying technologies in these recommendations are today's technologies. Tomorrow is certain to bring new, more powerful tools. We can plan on continuing improvement.

We can also expect this report to be a catalyst for more ideas that can fill in and enrich the picture of access for all Americans. I'm asking the GITS Board and the CIO Council to be active proponents for these new ideas and proposals. Those groups should lead us to an ever improving government that will serve America as never before.

— **AL GORE**

IT04:

ESTABLISH A NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT/ PUBLIC SAFETY NETWORK

INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS SIMPLIFY EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Imagine this: A fire following an earthquake is devastating a large urban area in northern California. Several local, state, and federal agencies —including fire and police units, state highway units, and national guard and defense units —are rushing to the scene. Even though they come from different jurisdictions, the units coordinate easily because they share a common communications system. The fire is contained quickly, emergency services are dispatched where needed, lives are saved, and property loss is reduced as a result.

Whether they are responding to a natural or technological disaster or performing search-and-rescue or interdiction activities, federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety workers must be able to communicate with each other effectively, efficiently, and securely. Most of this communication occurs over tactical land mobile radio systems.

However, interoperability across these different radio systems is difficult to achieve. Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies operate in different parts of the radio spectrum. Complicating this problem is the lack of security on most systems, leaving them open to interception and monitoring. When security is applied to the radio systems—as is done with many federal radio systems—interoperability depends on having the correct encryption key to communicate.

Moreover, every federal, state, and local law enforcement agency operates separate tactical networks in every metropolitan area in the country. Often, there are several independent network control centers operating within the same federal building with no interoperation. This expensive duplication of effort prevents the use of spectrally efficient equipment and results in less-than-optimum coverage for many agencies. In addition, technical and administrative support is duplicated throughout the federal government.

NEED FOR CHANGE

Recently, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, a part of the Department of Commerce, mandated that federal radio users begin the transition to more spectrally efficient (digital narrowband) radio systems beginning in 1995. The Federal Communications Commission is currently addressing this same issue applicable to state and local law enforcement and public safety.

The Associated Public Safety Communications Officers, Inc., is sponsoring a federal, state, local, and industry effort to develop technical standards for the next generation narrowband digital radio systems.

Over the next 10 to 15 years, all federal government radio systems will be replaced with digital technology. If this is done on an agency-by-agency basis—as was done in the past—the cost will be enormous and the same problems with interoperability will occur, resulting in costly redundancies of equipment and staffing. Current budget conditions make it critical that the federal law enforcement, public safety, and disaster response agencies coordinate the transition to digital narrowband systems. Only through a coordinated approach will cost savings be realized and the serious interoperability problems of the past be overcome.

An excellent mechanism for addressing these complex issues—and saving considerable dollars—is a shared infrastructure: a National Law Enforcement/Public Safety Wireless Network. Development of this network can be based on the efforts of two ongoing interagency initiatives.

- The Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Users Group, a joint Treasury-Justice Department initiative, was formed to plan and coordinate future shared-use wireless telecommunications systems and resources.

- The Communications Interoperability Working Group, which consists of representatives from the Department of Defense, Coast Guard, and federal law enforcement agencies, under the auspices of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, has been defining minimum baseline requirements for current, secure, interoperable federal radio systems.

These new technological advances will permit the deployment of intelligent radio systems that are feature enhanced, spectrally efficient, and secure. Interoperability will be accomplished, and the radio system can be connected to other fixed networks to improve the flow of information—e.g., fingerprints, mug shots, or criminal records to the uniformed officer or special agent on the street. A consolidated approach will result in numerous advantages in cost and quality of service.

ACTIONS

1. Formalize the Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Users Group. (1)

The Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General will co-sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalize the Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Users Group by April 1994. The MOU should define the charter and membership of the group, which should include—at a minimum—representation from all Justice and Treasury law enforcement agencies and bureaus, with participation from other federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety stakeholders.

2. Establish a National Law Enforcement/ Public Safety Wireless Network for use by federal, state, and local governments. (2)

The Government Information Technology Services Working Group should issue a memorandum by July 1994 directing the Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Users Group to coordinate establishment of an intergovernmental wireless network.

The users group should work with the Office of Management and Budget, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the Communications

Interoperability Working Group, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and state and local entities to:

- further define costs and benefits, and develop budget strategies; and

- develop an implementation plan for the National Law Enforcement/Public Safety Network to cover the next 10 years.

Responsibilities must be clearly defined, since the issue of which agency or activity funds and controls the network will be a point of contention. Establishment and use of the network must be handled at the highest level to avoid turf conflicts and to focus on goals, roles, methods, and relationships.

CROSS REFERENCES TO OTHER NPR REPORTS

Transforming Organizational Structures, ORG05:
Sponsor Three or More Cross-Departmental Initiatives Addressing Common Issues or Customers.

Department of the Treasury, TRE01:
Improve the Coordination and Structure of Federal Law Enforcement Agencies.

A06:
ESTABLISH THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL WIRELESS PUBLIC SAFETY NETWORK

Imagine this:A nervous father reports a missing child to a local 911 telephone dispatch station.A broadcast is sent over the public safety wireless communications network describing the child. The broadcast is immediately received by all local, state, and federal public safety workers in the area.A local policeman sends out a radio message to all the public safety workers warning of dangerous flooding from heavy rains in the area the child was last seen.A park ranger responds to the flood area and locates the little girl trapped on an embankment between two washed out ravines. The ranger immediately notifies the fire and rescue services, which respond in minutes. The child is returned home safely. The little girl was rescued because all relevant public safety officials were able to communicate over a common, secure, communications network.

The September 1993 National Performance Review report recognized the need for improving public safety communications capabilities. The report highlighted the need to address key challenges, such as competition for limited radio spectrum, limited public safety budgets, and keeping pace with advances in technology. The National Performance Review recognized that if public safety agencies coordinated their efforts in developing future systems, they could conquer those challenges, greatly enhance their abilities to fight the war on crime, and save money in the process.

The National Performance Review tasked the Federal Law Enforcement Wireless Users Group (FLEWUG) to develop a plan for a future, intergovernmental, shared use, public safety wireless communications network.

In September 1996, the joint Federal Communications Commission/National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee validated the underlying need for establishing the intergovernmental public safety wireless network. The report concluded that "unless immediate measures are taken to alleviate spectrum shortfalls and

promote interoperability, public safety agencies will not be able to adequately discharge their obligations to protect life and property in a safe, efficient, and cost effective manner."[1]

The FLEWUG has taken positive steps to develop an intergovernmental public safety wireless network. It developed a management plan that defined the goals, objectives, and actions required to develop the network.[2]

The management plan was used to obtain Congressional support and funding for testing the concept in several locations across the country. For example, the Public Safety Wireless Network Program Management Office is working with Iowa to establish a public safety wireless communications test bed. The FLEWUG has also implemented several consolidation projects. For example, in Hawaii, all the federal, state, and local law enforcement networks throughout the islands have been consolidated into a single microwave system under Project Rainbow. The U.S. Customs Service is sharing infrastructure to improve frequency utilization and conserve resources. In New York and New Jersey, Customs is sharing the infrastructure with the Department of Housing and Urban Development; in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and New Orleans, Louisiana, with the Immigration and Naturalization Service; and nationally, with the U.S. Border Patrol. The Customs Service and the National Guard Bureau are sharing frequencies and Over-the-Air Rekeying systems to improve drug interdiction efforts. Other agencies are also finding that they can improve efficiency and save resources by sharing.

In Homestead, Florida, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is sharing its antenna site and microwave relay with the U.S. Postal Service. These cooperative efforts have also included equipment sharing. In New York, the Drug Enforcement Agency provided the U.S.

Secret Service with UHF radios to use during the United Nations 50th Anniversary celebration.

NEED FOR CHANGE

Every day, local news stations report missing children, gang activities, drug wars, natural disasters, and other tragic events. People in the United States are concerned about public safety. Law enforcement and public safety workers must be provided with the best tools technology has to offer to make citizens secure in their homes and safe on their streets.

Today, critical federal, state, and local public safety communications are transmitted over tactical land mobile radio systems. Communicating across different agencies is difficult because systems have been purchased that operate in different frequencies. Most systems lack security and are open to interception and monitoring. Amateur radio enthusiasts and criminals are able to purchase scanning devices to monitor law enforcement and public safety frequencies.

In every metropolitan area of the country, federal, state, and local public safety officials operate separate tactical communications networks. In larger cities, dozens of radio antennas and network control centers located in the same building are unable to "talk" to one another. This inefficient and expensive use of resources demands both technical and policy solutions. The FLEWUG will demonstrate a prototype narrow band (12.5 kHz channel bandwidth) conventional, digital radio system in early 1997 with many law enforcement activities in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. The prototype equipment was developed by several vendors, with federal agencies and the State of Virginia funding the demonstration.

ACTIONS

1. Improve the coordination of public safety wireless communications.

By July 1997, the President should issue an Executive Order which directs all federal agencies with a public safety mandate and federal activities supporting the public safety community to participate in the activities of the FLEWUG in developing the future Public Safety Wireless Network.

2. Provide adequate radio frequency spectrum for public safety agencies.

The Government Information Technology Services (GITS) Board and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration should work with the Federal Communications Commission to outline options to balance the spectrum needs of public safety agencies with the other spectrum users. A filing should be developed and submitted to the Commission by September 1997.

By December 1997, the FLEWUG, through the GITS Board, should submit a plan to implement the recommendations in the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee report.

3. Support the development of technical standards for public safety wireless communications systems.

Properly defined, technical standards can provide a migration path as new technology comes to the market. The government should coordinate with industry to define and develop these standards. By June 1997, the Public Safety Wireless Network Program Management Office should provide a report which defines a consolidated federal position on standards for public safety radio systems.

The report should include a Common Operating Environment for current and emerging public safety land mobile radio equipment.

4. Include security in all public safety land mobile radio systems.

Future public safety land mobile radio systems must be secure. Lack of appropriate security controls creates the potential for overt or inadvertent damage, manipulation, exploitation, or denial of service. By April 1997, the GITS Board should assure that government systems security experts work with the public safety community and industry to define security guidelines, standards, and conformance test procedures for public safety land mobile radio systems and equipment.

5. Establish an alternative funding mechanism for federal, state, and local public safety officials to improve their wireless communications systems.

Congress has approved the use of "asset forfeiture funds" for test systems in fiscal year 1997. Asset forfeiture funds are sums of money generated by the auction of property seized by law enforcement as a result of a criminal conviction. This funding mechanism is but one innovative way to finance equipment purchases without increasing budgets.

By May 1997, the FLEWUG, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Commerce should establish an interagency working group to develop recommendations for other innovative ways to fund wireless public safety systems. These recommendations should be presented to the Office of Management and Budget by September 1997.

ENDNOTES

1. Final Report of the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee (PSWAC), September 11, 1996, page 2.

2. The Public Safety Wireless Network of the Future, Management Plan, Working Draft, 2nd edition, October 1995.

PSWN PROGRAM VISION AND MISSION

"ACHIEVING INTEROPERABILITY THROUGH COOPERATION AND COORDINATION"

A SHARED VISION...

Seamless, coordinated, and integrated public safety communications for the safe, effective, and efficient protection of life and property.

We share our vision of improved public safety communications with many organizations. These organizations include local, state, and federal agencies whose missions encompass the protection of life and property. Our vision is consistent with the Vice President's National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPRG), formerly known as the National Performance Review, and the NPRG's commitment to use information technology as the "great enabler for reinvention" of government services that benefit citizens.

A COMPELLING MISSION...

To plan for and foster interoperability among wireless networks that meet the requirements of local, state, and federal public safety in a manner consistent with the NPRG.

The NPRG has challenged the public safety community to make their communications more effective, efficient, and cost effective to better serve their customers. The NPRG has identified urgent actions for the community to address. Our mission stems from these actions and from strategic direction provided by our stakeholders.

...TO ACHIEVE INTEROPERABILITY

Assist with the integration of communications systems that permit persons from two or more different public safety agencies to interact with one another and to exchange information according to a prescribed method in order to achieve predictable results.

The NPRG suggests and we recognize that improving interoperability, and thus public safety communications as a whole, is a multi-dimensional challenge. We view five dimensions as essential building blocks for interoperability: spectrum, funding, technology, organization, and operations. A common theme throughout our efforts is addressing and resolving issues related to each of these aspects of interoperability.

Public Safety Wireless Network

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